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ACTION EA-20

INFO OCT-01 UPW-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-08 L-04
NSAE-00 NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 IO-16
AID-28 RSR-01 /137 W

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC, NARA 075787
REVIEWED BY Joan Dunbar DATE 1/26/82
RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
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PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8031
INFO USDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

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SUBJECT: PROVINCIAL COUNCILORS REQUEST ENDORSEMENTS BE INVALIDATED

1. SUMMARY AND COMMENT: AT A PRESS CONFERENCE JULY 30, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT: (A) A GROUP OF PROVINCIAL COUNCILORS HAD CALLED ON PRESIDENT THIEU TO "LIBERATE" ALL COUNCILOR ENDORSEMENTS WHICH HE HAS SO FAR COLLECTED TO PERMIT OTHER PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES TO RUN; AND (B) 21 PROVINCIAL COUNCILORS HAD REQUESTED THE SUPREME COURT TO SHIFT THEIR ENDORSEMENTS FROM THIEU TO VICE PRESIDENT KY. THE MOVES WERE CLEARLY ENGINEERED BY KY'S FOLLOWERS WHO ARE PRESSING AND PUBLICIZING THEIR SEARCH FOR ENDORSEMENTS. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

2. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE JULY 30 AT VICE PRESIDENT KY'S CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS, 30 MEMBERS OF A PRIVATE ASSOCIATION OF VIETNAMESE PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILORS DESCRIBED AS "UNDEMOCRATIC" THE IN-
ORDINATE NUMBER OF COUNCILOR ENDORSEMENTS WHICH PRESIDENT THIEU APPARANTLY HAS COLLECTED FOR HIS CANDIDACY. THEY DENOUNCED ALLEGED PRESSURES AND OTHER IRREGULARITIES PRACTICED BY PROVINCE CHIEFS IN OBTAINING THESE DOCUMENTS AND DEMANDED THAT THE PRESIDENT "LIBERATE" ALL OF HIS ENDORSEMENTS TO ENABLE OTHER SLATES TO RUN. THE PROVINCIAL COUNCILORS WHO PARTICIPATED

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IN THE PRESS CONFERENCE ALSO DISTRIBUTED COPIES OF A RESOLUTION CONTAINING THE ABOVE POINTS WHICH WERE ADOPTED BY 105 OF THEIR COLLEAGUES FOLLOWING A JULY 27-28 MEETING IN SAIGON.

3. IN ADDITION, THE COUNCILORS RELEASED THE TEXT OF A L ;TER DATED JULY 30 TO THE SUPREME COURT IN WHICH 21 PROVINCIAL COUNCILORS FROM SAIGON, BIEN HOA AND GIA DINH ASKED THAT THEIR ENDORSEMENTS FOR THIEU BE INVALIDATED AND TRANSFERRED TO KY. THE LETTER CLAIMED THAT MANY OF THE ENDORSEMENTS FOR THIEU HAD BEEN OBTAINED UNDER PRESSURE AND BEFORE THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION BILL WAS IN FACT SIGNED INTO LAW AND ALSO THAT THE AUTHORS' ENDORSEMENTS DID NOT ACCORD WITH LEGAL REQUIREMENTS.
AS MANY WERE OBTAINED IN BLANK, WERE UNDATED WHEN SIGNED AND LACKED OTHER ESSENTIAL INFORMATION SUBSEQUENTLY ADDED BY THE PROVINCE CHIEFS.

4. ALSO DURING THE JULY 30 PRESS CONFERENCE, THE PARTICIPANTS RELEASED THE TEXT OF A COMMUNIQUE SIGNED BY NINE PROVINCIAL COUNCILORS FROM GIA DINH WHICH GENERALLY ACCORDED WITH THE SUBSTANCE OF THE RESOLUTIONS MENTIONED PARA 2 ABOVE. THE COMMUNIQUE REQUESTED THAT PRESIDENT THIEU RELEASE ALL COUNCILOR ENDORSEMENTS WHICH HE HAS SO FAR COLLECTED AND REPEATED ARGUMENTS THAT THE PRESIDENT'S ALLEGED MONOPOLIZATION OF ENDORSEMENTS WAS DANGEROUSLY UNDEMOCRATIC.
BUNKER